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Avista Corporation and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 77, AFL-CIO. Case 19-CA-33103

August 9, 2011

DECISION AND ORDER

BY CHAIRMAN LIEBMAN AND MEMBERS BECKER
AND HAYES

This is a refusal-to-bargain case in which the Respondent is contesting the Union's certification as bargaining representative in the underlying representation proceeding. Pursuant to a charge filed on May 26, 2011, the Acting General Counsel issued the complaint on June 9, 2011, alleging that the Respondent has violated Section 8(a)(5) and (1) of the Act by refusing the Union's request to bargain following the Union's certification in Case 19-RC-15234. (Official notice is taken of the "record" in the representation proceeding as defined in the Board's Rules and Regulations, Secs. 102.68 and 102.69(g); *Frontier Hotel*, 265 NLRB 343 (1982).) The Respondent filed an answer admitting in part and denying in part the allegations in the complaint.

On June 27, 2011, the Acting General Counsel filed a Motion for Summary Judgment. On June 28, 2011, the Board issued an order transferring the proceeding to the Board and a Notice to Show Cause why the motion should not be granted. The Respondent filed a response.

The National Labor Relations Board has delegated its authority in this proceeding to a three-member panel.

Ruling on Motion for Summary Judgment

The Respondent admits its refusal to bargain, but contests the validity of the Union's certification on the basis that the unit is inappropriate.

All representation issues raised by the Respondent were or could have been litigated in the prior representation proceeding. The Respondent does not offer to adduce at a hearing any newly discovered and previously unavailable evidence, nor does it allege any special circumstances that would require the Board to reexamine the decision made in the representation proceeding. We therefore find that the Respondent has not raised any representation issue that is properly litigable in this unfair labor practice proceeding. See *Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co. v. NLRB*, 313 U.S. 146, 162 (1941). Accordingly, we grant the Motion for Summary Judgment.

On the entire record, the Board makes the following

FINDINGS OF FACT

I. JURISDICTION

The Respondent, a State of Washington corporation, with an office and place of business in Spokane, Washington (the facility), has been engaged in the business of providing electric and natural gas utility services. During the 12-month period preceding the issuance of the complaint, a representative period, the Respondent, in conducting its business operations described above, derived gross revenues in excess of \$250,000 and purchased and received at the facility goods valued in excess of \$50,000 directly from points outside the State of Washington.

We find that the Respondent is an employer engaged in commerce within the meaning of Section 2(2), (6), and (7) of the Act and that the Union, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 77, AFL-CIO, is a labor organization within the meaning of Section 2(5) of the Act.

II. ALLEGED UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICES

A. The Certification

Following the election held October 5, 2009, the Union was certified on May 3, 2011, as the exclusive collective-bargaining representative of the employees in the following appropriate unit:

All full-time and part-time central distribution dispatchers employed by [Respondent] at its Spokane, Washington location; excluding all other employees, guards and supervisors as defined in the Act.

The Union continues to be the exclusive collective-bargaining representative of the unit employees under Section 9(a) of the Act.

B. Refusal to Bargain

At all material times, Terry Bushnell held the position of director of human resources and has been a supervisor within the meaning of Section 2(11) of the Act and an agent of the Respondent within the meaning of Section 2(13) of the Act.

On about May 11, 2011, the Union requested in writing that the Respondent bargain collectively with the Union as the unit employees' exclusive collective-bargaining representative. On about May 23, 2011, the Respondent, in writing by Bushnell, informed the Union that it would not bargain with it as the exclusive collective-bargaining representative of the unit, and thereafter, has failed and refused to recognize and bargain with the Union as the unit employees' exclusive collective-bargaining representative. We find that this failure and

refusal constitutes an unlawful failure and refusal to recognize and bargain with the Union in violation of Section 8(a)(5) and (1) of the Act.

CONCLUSION OF LAW

By failing and refusing since May 23, 2011, to recognize and bargain with the Union as the exclusive collective-bargaining representative of the employees in the unit, the Respondent has engaged in unfair labor practices affecting commerce within the meaning of Section 8(a)(5) and (1) and Section 2(6) and (7) of the Act.

REMEDY

Having found that the Respondent has violated Section 8(a)(5) and (1) of the Act, we shall order it to cease and desist, to recognize and bargain on request with the Union, and, if an understanding is reached, to embody the understanding in a signed agreement.

To ensure that the employees are accorded the services of their selected bargaining agent for the period provided by law, we shall construe the initial period of the certification as beginning the date the Respondent begins to bargain in good faith with the Union. *Mar-Jac Poultry Co.*, 136 NLRB 785 (1962); *Lamar Hotel*, 140 NLRB 226, 229 (1962), *enfd.* 328 F.2d 600 (5th Cir. 1964), *cert. denied* 379 U.S. 817 (1964); *Burnett Construction Co.*, 149 NLRB 1419, 1421 (1964), *enfd.* 350 F.2d 57 (10th Cir. 1965).

ORDER

The National Labor Relations Board orders that the Respondent, Avista Corporation, Spokane, Washington, its officers, agents, successors, and assigns, shall

1. Cease and desist from

(a) Failing and refusing to recognize and bargain with International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 77, AFL-CIO, the Union, as the exclusive collective-bargaining representative of the employees in the bargaining unit.

(b) In any like or related manner interfering with, restraining, or coercing employees in the exercise of the rights guaranteed them by Section 7 of the Act.

2. Take the following affirmative action necessary to effectuate the policies of the Act.

(a) On request, bargain with the Union as the exclusive collective-bargaining representative of the employees in the following appropriate unit on terms and conditions of employment and, if an understanding is reached, embody the understanding in a signed agreement:

All full-time and part-time central distribution dispatchers employed by [Respondent] at its Spokane, Washington location; excluding all other employees, guards and supervisors as defined in the Act.

(b) Within 14 days after service by the Region, post at its facility in Spokane, Washington, copies of the attached notice marked "Appendix."¹ Copies of the notice, on forms provided by the Regional Director for Region 19, after being signed by the Respondent's authorized representative, shall be posted by the Respondent and maintained for 60 consecutive days in conspicuous places, including all places where notices to employees are customarily posted. In addition to physical posting of paper notices, notices shall be distributed electronically, such as by email, posting on an intranet or an internet site, and/or other electronic means, if the Respondent customarily communicates with its employees by such means.² Reasonable steps shall be taken by the Respondent to ensure that the notices are not altered, defaced, or covered by any other material. In the event that, during the pendency of these proceedings, the Respondent has gone out of business or closed its facility involved in these proceedings, the Respondent shall duplicate and mail, at its own expense, a copy of the notice to all current employees and former employees employed by the Respondent at any time since May 23, 2011.

(c) Within 21 days after service by the Region, file with the Regional Director a sworn certification of a responsible official on a form provided by the Region attesting to the steps that the Respondent has taken to comply.

Dated, Washington, D.C. August 9, 2011

Wilma B. Liebman, Chairman

Craig Becker, Member

Brian E. Hayes, Member

(SEAL) NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

¹ If this Order is enforced by a judgment of a United States court of appeals, the words in the notice reading "Posted by Order of the National Labor Relations Board" shall read "Posted Pursuant to a Judgment of the United States Court of Appeals Enforcing an Order of the National Labor Relations Board."

² For the reasons stated in his dissenting opinion in *J. Picini Flooring*, 356 NLRB No. 9 (2010), Member Hayes would not require electronic distribution of the notice.

APPENDIX

NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES

POSTED BY ORDER OF THE

NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

An Agency of the United States Government

The National Labor Relations Board has found that we violated Federal labor law and has ordered us to post and obey this notice.

FEDERAL LAW GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO

Form, join, or assist a union

Choose representatives to bargain with us on your behalf

Act together with other employees for your benefit and protection

Choose not to engage in any of these protected activities.

WE WILL NOT fail and refuse to recognize and bargain with International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 77, AFL-CIO, as the exclusive collective-bargaining representative of the employees in the bargaining unit.

WE WILL NOT in any like or related manner interfere with, restrain, or coerce you in the exercise of the rights listed above.

WE WILL, on request, bargain with the Union and put in writing and sign any agreement reached on terms and conditions of employment for our employees in the following bargaining unit:

All full-time and part-time central distribution dispatchers employed by us at our Spokane, Washington location; excluding all other employees, guards and supervisors as defined in the Act.

AVISTA CORPORATION